

Piapoco language

Piapoco is an Arawakan language of Colombia and Venezuela.

A "Ponares" language is inferred from surnames, and may have been Piapoco or Achagua.

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History

Piapoco is a branch of the Arawak language, which also includes Achagua and Tariana.^[4] Piapoco is considered a Northern Arawak language.^[5] There are only about 3,000 Piapoco speakers left today. These people live in the Meta, Vichada, and Guaviare rivers in Colombia^[6] Piapoco speakers also reside in Venezuela.^[7] It is an endangered language.^[7]

Geography/Background

The Piapocos come from the larger tribe, the Piaroa, who are indigenous to the Amazon rain forest.^[8] The Piapoco people originally lived in the midsection of Rio Guaviare, later moving in the 18th century to avoid settlers, missionaries, and others.^[9]

Grammar

A Piapoco-Spanish dictionary containing 2,500 words was written by Deloris Klumpp, in which botanical identification of plants were captured, although not all.^[5] The Piapoco language follows the following grammatical rules: plural suffix -nai used for animates only, derivational suffixes masculine -iri, feminine -tua, suffix -mi 'late, defunct,' nominalizing -si, declarative mood marker -ka.^[5] Piapoco is unique in that it seems to be a nominative-accusative language.^[5] There are eighteen segmental phonemes, fourteen consonant and four vowels in the Piapoco language.^[10]

Bilingualism

Piapoco	
	<i>Cháse</i>
Native to	Colombia, Venezuela
Native speakers	6,400 (2001–2007) ^[1]
Language family	<div>Arawakan<ul style="list-style-type: none">Northern<ul style="list-style-type: none">Upper Amazon<ul style="list-style-type: none">Western Nawiki<ul style="list-style-type: none">Piapoko languages<ul style="list-style-type: none">Piapoco</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	pio
Glottolog	piap1246 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/piap1246) Piapoco ^[2] <div>pona1251 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/pona1251) Ponares – undemonstrated^[3]</div>

The word Piapoco is a Spanish nickname in reference to the toucan.^[6] Most Piapoco also speak Spanish.^[9] Speakers who have had less contact with Spanish speakers more often pronounce the phoneme "s" as a voiceless interdental fricative.^[10] Younger speakers of the Piapoco language tend to eliminate the "h" more than older speakers due to their contact with the Spanish language.^[10]

When a large portion of people come in contact with another language and are competent in it, their language gradually becomes more like the other.^[11] This allows for a gradual convergence, where grammar and semantics of one language begin to replicate the other.^[11]

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